



Polystyrene (PS#6) Recycling News - Markets & Access Expanding

New Developments

Good progress has been made in PS foam recycling access to citizens across Canada due to affordable technology to densify and reduce shipping costs to markets. The largest increase in recycling access for all plastics was in foamed food/EPS polystyrene packaging. This would not be possible without strong markets which continue to grow in capacity and types of end market applications for the recycled PS. The opportunity for the diversion of foam PS and non-foam PS is being recognized as another growth area for recyclers and end markets.

Broadening Recycled PS End Market Applications – New Developments

Markets exist for all grades of PS foam (white and mixed colour). PS foam white and mixed coloured blends have been extensively used in manufacturing decorative picture frames and architectural mouldings. This has been the main market for recycled PS Foam, but new and exciting developments are developing that will increase demand and value for these recycled materials.

Expanding market applications for mixed coloured foam is being used in value added compounding operations and is currently in demand by Merlin Plastics in B.C.. Merlin has developed an application in the electrical component supply chain utilizing coloured post-use PS foam. Another example in Quebec is the Lavergne Groupe which has the capacity to compound and use mixed coloured PS Foam in a variety of applications including coat hangers.

New Waste Composition Data Highlights XPS Food Foam Diversion Opportunity

Through recent waste composition studies and analysis of PS resin consumption, new data has found the residential waste stream is comprised of significantly more XPS food foam packaging (3 times higher) than EPS cushion packaging. Maximizing collection of XPS food foam has the greatest potential to reach significant diversion levels for PS foams as it is 2 to 6 times more dense and has a higher bulk density than EPS foam which will contribute to lower handling and transportation cost.

PS Access across Canada

PS foamed food packaging recycling access has grown to 32% (up 7% since 2009). EPS protective packaging recycling access is 31% and has more than doubled from 12 % (2009). Non-foam PS recycling access is 44% and growing with communities implementing “All Plastic Container Collection” which includes the #3 to #7 rigid (non-foam) plastic containers

Quebec:

CPIA has been working with Eco Enterprise Quebec (EEQ), Recyc Quebec and other stakeholders on the PS Committee to expand PS recycling in Quebec and the City of Montreal. The City of Sherbrooke has established a PS Foam collection depot pilot project collecting PS Foam Food, EPS Cushion Packaging and foam Insulation board.

Ontario:

PS Foamed food recycling access rate is 57% and EPS is 56%. Non-foamed PS recycling access rates are currently 52% - with Toronto, Halton and Durham Regions announcing mixed rigid plastics recycling launches in 2013, access rates in Ontario are projected to be over 70% in 2013. CPIA in partnership with SO & WDO has successfully expanded PS Foam densification capacity and improved processing and marketing efficiencies.

British Columbia:

In the last 24 mos. inroads to increasing recycling access for foamed food(XPS) and EPS cushion packaging have been made – foamed food recycling access 20% (up over 6%) and EPS access 17% (up 3%). A successful City of Langley, CPIA and Emterra curbside bag collection test for PS foam collection builds another collection option in addition to B.C.'s extensive depot collection system. CPIA is working with stewards on their recycling plans on foam food and cushion packaging through BC's extensive depot systems.

Maritimes:

CPIA in partnership with Nova Scotia MOE, RRFB and municipalities are working to advance plastics and PS foam recycling access rates with the potential for a new MRF densifier to be installed at one of the provinces regional MRF's.

PS#6 Recycling Resources and Contact

CPIA Polystyrene Link: <http://www.plastics.ca/Recycling/Polystyrene/index.php> will provide the latest news on PS recycling and information on PS recycling.

If you have questions on PS recycling contact Joe Hruska at jhruska@cogeco.ca or at Cell 416-930-1796.